

Title – Potential for White Dam Removal

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Abstract – The presence of run-of-river structures has negatively affected in-stream biota and ecological processes for centuries. White dam, owned by the Warnell School of Forestry in Athens, Georgia is typical of many such structures in Georgia in that the structure is aging, provides no economic benefit, and exposes the owner to substantial liability risk. However, this project presents a unique opportunity for a removal, based on its location on university property with a largely undeveloped riverbank upstream and down. When it was decommissioned, the control structures were removed. While these two breaches allow substantial sediment passage, our models indicate that the openings allow upstream fish passage for many native species only under rare flow conditions, if at all, due to swim speed constraints. The area is also a potential site for the restocking of juvenile American shad fry by the GA DNR. Several UGA classes have addressed the issues around removal of this structure and we will briefly summarize the pre-permitting efforts, to date. These include the legalities of 404 and NWP27 permitting, local buffer ordinances, FEMA flood risk assessment, HEC-RAS modeling, passage rate equations for species of concern, investigation of present invasive species, restoration opportunities, and sources of funding. Additional interests with the project are historic preservation of the mill section of the dam and pre- and post-monitoring of sediment and species movement and any changes in species assemblage.

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